

US Fish and Wildlife Service – Southwest Region Hurricane Rita Update as of September 27, 2005 – 1800 HOURS

PERSONNEL STATUS:

Number of employees unaccounted for due to this disaster: 0
Number of employees affected by this disaster: report pending
Number of employees on Administrative Leave: report pending
Number of employees assigned to the team: 59 FWS – 1 USFS

COOP: EMPLOYEES WORKING AT AN ALTERNATE SITE: 0

Until further notice, Central Command briefings at 0845 and the conference calls at 0900 will continue between the Regional Office, the Incident Command Team and those Field Stations that received direct impact from the Hurricane.

Employees must make requests for assistance through the Team who will then place the request to the Hurricane Rita Dispatch Desk for coordination. All personnel support, boats, vehicles, equipment and supplies are to be requested and assigned through the system.

A Critical Stress Debriefing unit has been ordered. Employees needing immediate assistance can call a counselor at 1-800-222-0364 24-hours a day. The Employees Assistance Program for this incident will be expanded to include assistance with insurance claims.

Spill Response team reported some oiled birds – smaller spills occurring in Cameron Parish.

COSTS TO DATE: About \$15 million in damages

SOUTHWEST REGION T-3 COMMAND TEAM ACCOMPLISHMENTS REPORT

HEAT INDEX: UP TO 120 DEGREES

September 24

- Obtained storage capacity for 500 gallons of diesel and 100 gallons of unleaded
- Operations assisted Deborah Holle (Balcones Canyonlands NWR) with various refuge assignments
- I-Suite data base established and all resources entered and accounted for
- Acquired O and E numbers for all resources in ROSS
- Developed an IAP
- Completed 209
- Established time recording system
- Wrote and distributed a news release
- Prepared to relocate ICP to Anahuac NWR
- Team will continue to assess damage and provide emergency vehicle access to communities and NWR sites.
- Three SORTs (Special Operations Response Teams) were dispatched to assess hurricane damage to National Wildlife Refuges and scout appropriate ICP sites. ICP will be moved from Balcones Canyonlands NWR to Anahuac NWR

- SORT members deputized as Special Deputy U.S. Marshals
- Team liaison began making contacts with state and county officials and refuge managers in affected areas to determine appropriate mission assignments.

September 25

- ICP relocated from Balcones Canyonlands NWR to Anahuac, Texas
- Law Enforcement base team secured routes and affected convoy of team over 300 miles (Balcones Canyonlands NWR to Anahuac, TX)
- Cleared all emergency access routes in Chambers County Mid-County, including town of Anahuac
- Law Enforcement advance team met with local refuge officer
- Met with and conducted initial briefing with Chambers County sheriff
- Assisted Chambers County Sheriffs Department with daytime and evening patrols

September 26

- Located and established Incident Command Post at Chambers County Commissioner Precinct #4 building in Baytown, TX County facility – phone lines pending – FAX WITH COVER SHEETS TO: 281-573-1823
- Established contact with Port Arthur Type 1 ICP and Public Works Department and arranged for them to provide a daily list of emergency access needs (sawyers needed).

McFaddin NWR

Accomplishments:

- Conducted emergency access Services with Texas Department of transportation – cleared trees, and road debris from Hwy 87 from Sabine Pass to McFaddin NWR (9 miles) and four side streets (1 mile) within Sabine Pass, TX
- Initiated damage assessment
- Continued operations to protect salvageable facilities at McFaddin NWR (50% complete, will be completed 9/27)
- Removed carpet from fire cache, bunch house (bottom floor)
- North 20-foot section of maintenance/storage building has been destroyed; engineering needs to assess safety and reparability of building

Initial damage assessment:

- Water damage to bunk house
- Water damage to fire cache
- Damage to visitor center roof and water damage to Friends Group portion of the building.
- Will remove north end of maintenance/storage shed to secure
- Road damaged and repair needed

Texas Point NWR

Accomplishments:

- Initiated damage assessment
- Pepco Oil Company is providing FWS with lodging; we're providing their staff with water and MREs.

- Limited access deters full assessment and ability to secure

Initial damage assessment:

- Vehicles and three tanks have washed into the refuge (unknown origin and contents, to be treated as a contaminants issue)
- Truck tractor is blocking a box culvert bridge on the refuge ingress/egress road, threatening continued access to refuge
- If Port Arthur opens to road to the refuge, FWS will need to arrange for security
- Unknown, audible pipeline leak limits access to area (EPA, gas company, and Coast Guard have been notified)

Trinity River NWR

Assessed damage

- Covered office roof, removed ceiling and insulation, established generator to start drying building
- Cleared (with county road dept) road access into refuge and to hunt tracks
- (3-4 hours needed to complete tasks)

Initial Damage assessment:

- Water damage to headquarters
- Access issues throughout

Anahuac NWR:

Accomplishments:

- Secured hunt check station and covered roof
- Headquarters storage building removed – building remains open
- Restored order to materials yard
- Cleared workshop bay doors

Initial damage assessment:

- Headquarters storage building – several bay doors blown in
- Destroyed workshop bay doors, scattered piping through materials yard
- Damaged roof of hunt check station and water damage to interior

Law Enforcement Emergency Assistance:

- Coordination of call-up for camp security (4 Leos) and assisted state policy with security and presence at fuel/gas/food stations
- SORT Team deputized by Sheriff Larive/Judge Sylvia of Chambers County
- Security established at new ICP (Baytown, TX)
- Established daytime presence at food distribution and stores; nighttime patrols to prevent looting
- Provided vehicle to Chambers County Sheriffs Office for patrol

Cooperators:

- Chambers County Judge Sylvia, Mid County Commissioner Judy Edmonds and West County Commissioner have greatly assisted in providing temporary Incident Command Post locations and are facilitating team housing.

- Chambers County Sheriff assisted with camp security and Anahuac volunteer fire department provided weapons cache and housing for FWS LE.
- Cleveland and Conroe, Texas police departments provided urban escort services for FWS relocation convoy.
- Liberty County Sheriff and Texas Department of Public Safety held traffic at intersection (SR 321 & SR 101 and Moss Hill, respectively).
- Proprietor of the Wooden Spoon (Edie Woods), the only functioning restaurant in Anahuac, Texas, have been providing meals to emergency relief workers, including FWS when we are operating in the area.

END OF REPORT

INFORMATION ACCESS:

CRITICAL INCIDENT STRESS COUNSELORS CAN BE REACHED 24-HOURS AT:

1-800- 222-0364

INTERNET:

Anyone seeking information on Hurricane Rita may do so via these Service links:

<http://www.fws.gov/southwest/> <http://www.fws.gov/>

R-2 HURRICANE RITA EMERGENCY INFORMATION/DISPATCH DESK:

Employees can reach the Southwest Region's Command Center's Hurricane Rita Emergency Information Desk by e-mail or text messaging at: hurricanerita@fws.gov

TELEPHONE:

The Emergency Information and resources Dispatch Desk is being staffed at the Regional Office from 0600 to 1800 daily. The Desk is serving as a centralized communications base for all affected staff and offices.

***HURRICANE RITA EMERGENCY INFORMATION DESK**
PHONE NUMBER: 505-248-6508 FAX: 505-248-6475

Employees may check for pre-recorded information on the Region's 24-Hour Emergency Phone Line at:

***24-Hour Employee Emergency Hotline: 505-248-6543**

NOTE: Any media inquiries may be coordinated by External Affairs: 505-248-6911

Daily updates will be completed by COB each day and press releases issued as necessary.

END OF REPORT